

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

Via WebEx

21 October 2021 @ 2.00 pm

Minutes

In attendance:

Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General (Chair)
Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary General
Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector
Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director, Teaching Council
Chris Kelly, PO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
Martin McLoughlin, PO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE)
Sinéad Keenaghan, PO, Payroll
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance
Edel Harte, A/APO, Pensions
Deirdre Cullen, PO, Statistics
Áine Garvin, APO, External Staff Relations (for Aoife Conduit)
Clare Butler, PO, Teacher Terms and Conditions

Also in attendance:

Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Supply Secretariat

Apologies:

Tim Conlon, HEA
Aoife Conduit, Assistant Secretary General
Fiona O'Byrne, PO, Higher Education, D/FHERIS
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions
Mark Bohan, PO, External Staff Relations
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 26th August 2021 were agreed.

2. Covid-19 emergency and teacher supply

The following points were noted:

(i) Primary sub teacher supply issues

- Management bodies and schools have recent weeks reported increased challenges in recruiting substitute teachers, particularly at primary level.
- The Department and the Teaching Council are engaging with the education partners on this issue on an ongoing basis.
- Work is continuing in the Department to determine the drivers for the increased demand and to quantify the level of increased demand.
- Various measures have been introduced, including an expansions of the substitute teacher supply panels and flexible school placement arrangements.

- The option of allowing job sharing teachers to carry out substitute work on the days they are rostered off in schools other than their base schools is being explored.
- Ensuring a sufficient supply of substitute teachers is an urgent issue for the Department.

(ii) Flexible student placement arrangements

- Guidance on arrangements for school placements in 2021/22 has issued to all ITE providers.
- The Department and the Teaching Council are scheduled to meet shortly with primary and post primary ITE providers to ensure that programme delivery provides the maximum flexibility for PME students to provide short term substitution cover.

(iii) 2021 registration arrangements for NQTs qualified outside Ireland

- Approximately 90 foreign qualified NQTs have to date applied for their induction to be undertaken in Ireland in 2021/22, under regulations made by the Council, and which apply on a time bound, exceptional basis.
- The closing date for applications is 29th October 2021.

(iv) Primary sub teacher supply panels

- The operation of the supply panels is being reviewed.
- An increase in the number of teachers on the supply panels, targeted at areas of high demand, is being explored.

(v) Retired teachers

Waiver on abatement of pensions

- DPER has agreed to consider waivers of abatement on an individual, case-by-case basis.
- It was agreed that Pensions Section will continue to engage with DPER regarding an extension to the waiver.

3. Data to support teacher supply planning

(i) Post primary teacher demand and supply report

- *Survey of unmet demand for teachers in post primary schools*

The following points were noted:

- The survey of unmet demand for teachers issued to all post primary schools on 4 October 2021.
- Approximately 200 schools have responded to date.
- Reminders have been issued by the post primary management bodies to all schools.
- The closing date for the receipt of the completed survey is 12 November 2021.

4. Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

The following points were noted:

(i) Teaching Transforms campaign: next phase

- It is intended that the next phase of the campaign will coincide with the lead in to CAO and PME programme application closing dates.
- It is intended that diversity in the teaching profession and teaching in the Irish medium sector will be included in the campaign.

(ii) Plans for engagement with guidance counsellors (Tomás Ó Ruairc)

- The Teaching Council has approached the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) and the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) to progress further engagement on choices available to students in regard to teaching as a career.

(iii) Higher Options conference

- Due to an administrative oversight on the part of the event organisers, the Teaching Council was unable to attend the 2021 Higher Options conference.

(iv) Thematic focus groups

- The Communications Working Group is exploring the use of thematic focus groups to take place in early 2022 in advance of the National Consultative Forum.
- A number of possible themes are being considered by the Working Group.

(v) Development of a recruitment portal for long term teacher vacancies

- IPPN is completing a Data Protection Impact Statement and is engaging with an external GDPR expert in relation to certain specific areas.
- Once there is clarification in relation to these queries, the DPIA will be circulated to relevant stakeholders for consideration.
- The Department will continue to engage with IPPN and stakeholders on the developments of the portal.

Sub Seeker data

- On 20th October 2021, 473 teachers were available on *Sub Seeker* (200 primary, 119 PP, 103 FE, 18 PME PP, 25 PME primary, 8 other).
- Teacher Supply is engaging with IPPN with regard to data from *Sub Seeker* on substitute teacher demand and supply, including on a regional basis.
- Teacher Supply will explore with IPPN the development of standard reports on demand and supply using data from *Sub Seeker* and *Educationposts.ie*.

5. Higher Education

(i) Post primary teacher upskilling programmes

The following points were noted:

New Irish upskilling programme in 2022

- The HEA has agreed to issue a call to ITE providers for an Irish upskilling programme, to commence in 2022 and the Department is engaging directly with the HEA to progress this.
- The targeted commencement date is January 2022.

Existing programmes

- The HEIs have opened their application processes for the 2022 upskilling programmes.
- The number of places on the existing upskilling programmes (Spanish, maths, physics) are to be increased for the 2022 intake.
- The numbers of places will be communicated to the HEIs in the coming weeks.

Evaluation of upskilling programmes

- An RFT being drafted for an evaluation of the upskilling programmes.
- The ERC has provided observations on the draft RFT.
- It is anticipated that the RFT process will take several months to complete.

(ii) ITE numbers 2021/22

The group noted the following data on ITE programme student entry numbers for 2021/22:

NUI PME 2021/22

- Applications: 1,296
- Offers: 881
- Acceptances: 613

CAO 2021/22

- Primary Ed 1st round offers 1,155
- Post Primary Ed 1st round offers 1,141

The following points were noted:

- Data are not currently available on TCD and DCU PME programmes student entry numbers.
- DFHERIS are to provide final CAO figures, which will be made available to the Group for info.
- Arrangements are being made for a data sharing agreement between Statistics Section and the HEA, which will facilitate access to comprehensive data on ITE student and graduate numbers.

It was agreed, in the interim, to explore the option of obtaining regular data on student numbers and graduates directly from the HEIs.

(iii) Review of school placement guidelines / implementation of Working Group report

The following points were noted:

- The working group to oversee the development of a student placement system has been established and a specification for the system is being drafted.
- It is intended that the Treoraithe Professional Learning Programme Working Group will meet before the end of 2021.

(iv) Student supports

A paper from Higher Ed Equity of Access was circulated to the Group for information on student support arrangements for 2021/22., including budget 2022 improvements, details of the review of the student grant scheme and changes to post graduate supports for 2021/22.

(v) Diversity in the teaching profession

Draft National Access Plan

A paper from Higher Ed Equity of Access on the new National Access Plan was circulated to the Group for information.

The following points were noted:

- Comprehensive consultation with stakeholders has taken place in regard to the development of the NAP.
- HEEA and the HEA are working on the publication of the new NAP in the coming months.

New PATH 1 measures

A paper from Higher Ed Equity of Access, setting out an overview of phase 2 PATH projects, was circulated to the Group for information.

The Group noted the contribution of the PATH 1 measures to supporting diversity in the teaching profession.

(vi) Teaching Council review of the impact of the reconfigured ITE programmes

The Group considered a paper prepared by the Teaching Council on planned longitudinal research.

The following points were noted:

- The review corresponds with an action in the Teacher Supply Action Plan in regard to reviewing the impact of the reconfigured ITE programmes.
- There has been extensive engagement between the Teaching Council and the Department in regard to developing a specification for the review.
- The proposed reporting timelines have been reduced following these engagements.
- It is envisaged that an RFT will issue for the review and a market sounding exercise will be conducted to inform the RFT process.

It was agreed to give further consideration to which cohorts of ITE graduates should be included in the research.

Supply of post primary teachers in certain targeted subjects

The Group considered post primary subjects in which there may be particular shortages of teachers.

Noting the ongoing survey of unmet demand, it was agreed to prepare a paper for the Group on teacher supply in the subjects where the highest levels of shortage are being reported, with a view to considering potential additional measures to address these shortages.

6. Policies and arrangements for schools and teachers that impact on teacher supply

Update on new approach to the Policies and Arrangements WG.

The following points were noted:

- It is intended that the Policies and Arrangements WG will initially focus on three priority areas: CPD; the employment of primary teachers in post primary special education settings and EPV leave.

- Two working groups will be put together to consider these areas and report to the Policies and Arrangements WG.
- ToRs for the WGs have been drafted and will be circulated shortly to Policies and Arrangements WG for approval.

7. Irish medium schools

(i) Development of a policy for Irish medium education outside the Gaeltacht

The following points were noted:

- An intradepartmental working group is progressing the development of the IM policy.
- The Working Group is chaired by the Gaeltacht Unit and includes representatives from relevant sections across the Department.
- The demand for, and supply of, teachers in IM settings is on the Working Group's agenda.
- It is intended that an IM PME will be developed under the Policy on Gaeltacht Education. An open tender process will be required and an RFI has been issued to potential providers.

8. Spanish Visiting Teacher Scheme

The following points were noted:

- Ireland is participating in the Spanish Visiting Teacher Scheme for the first time in 2021/22.
- 106 potential visiting teachers and 24 schools expressed an interest in the scheme at the outset.
- Two teachers were placed in schools this year, one in Cork and one in Kildare. It is expected that the numbers will increase in the coming years but that they will remain relatively small. It is intended to place up to five teachers in 2022/23.
- A review of the scheme was conducted in conjunction with the Ministry of Education in Spain, the Spanish Embassy, PPLI and one of the participating schools.
- The Department has agreed to consider a range of logistical issues to see how the process can be streamlined for future intakes.

It was agreed to explore the potential for similar arrangements for teachers of languages other than Spanish.

9. Teacher Supply Action Plan

Proposal to remove Action 17 (capital funding)

The following points were noted.

- A devolved capital grant is available to HEIs for minor expenditure, including to support teacher supply (e.g. infrastructural improvement works).
- The devolved capital grant was not in place when the original TS Action Plan was published in 2018.
- In that context, the Teacher Supply Higher Ed Coordination Group reviewed action 17 of the draft TS Action Plan (*Funding for capital grants to support teacher supply to be made available to HEIs via the HEA for 2021*).
- It is now proposed to omit this action from the Teacher Supply Action Plan.

The proposed amendment to the draft Action Plan was noted by the Implementation Group.

HEA

It was noted that the draft Action Plan is with the HEA for observations on higher education actions, a number of which they are a key lead.

10. AOB

The Group noted with appreciation the engagement of the various Department sections and the Teaching Council in addressing recent teacher supply challenges

11. Date of next meeting

2nd December 2021.

**Teacher Supply Secretariat
November 2021**